

*Spence*  
*The State of the World in general, and of GREAT-  
BRITAIN in particular, as to Religion, and the Aspects  
of Providence, seriously and impartially considered,*

IN A

*4475. e. 14.  
1-22.*

# S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

HABERDASHERS - HALL,

OCTOBER 21, 1770.

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By THOMAS GIBBONS, D.D.

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*Published at the Request of several who heard it.*

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Pande meis Aurem Monitis, quicunque Virorum  
Incolis Eoas, Hesperiasque Plagas!  
Auscultent clari Proceres, ignobile Vultus,  
Et qui Divitiis pollet, et Aëris inops—  
Seria Res agitur—

JONSTON, PSAL. XLIX. 1, 2, 4.

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The State of the World in general, and of Great  
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Printed at the University Press.

It is now known, that the

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Antiquaries have been

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L. O. N. D. O.

Printed by James Baskin, in the Strand, near

St. Dunstons Church, in the Strand.

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ISAIAH xxi. 6.

*For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he sees.*

**T**HE greatest part of this chapter is taken up in a prophecy of the destruction of *Babylon*, that imperial and most magnificent city, and which exercised a dominion over the rest of the world, and in particular most miserably oppressed the people of *Judah*, destroying by fire the city of *Jerusalem*, not sparing the temple of God itself, and carrying away the inhabitants into a very afflictive and long captivity. But as *Babylon* had oppressed others, the time should come when she should be oppressed herself; and the chapter before us, written many years † before the event took place,

B predicts

† If we suppose *Isaiab* to have delivered the predictions of our chapter in the year *Hezekiah* died, the last of the kings in whose reigns he is said to have prophesied, *Isa. i. 1*, no less a space than that of one hundred and sixty years must have elapsed between the time of the prophet's vision, and the taking of *Babylon* by *Cyrus*, according to the learned archbishop *Usher*. Vid. *Usserii Annales*, Vol. I. P. 106, and 144.

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predicts both her fall, and the execution of the divine vengeance upon her by the *Medes* and *Persians*.

The first five verses of this chapter ascertain, and particularly describe the conquest of *Babylon*, and who should be the conquerors. The same event is declared again in the five following verses, though in a different form, and the repetition might serve in those days to confirm the faith of the people of God in that ever-memorable, and to them most happy event, since not till *Cyrus* had made himself master of *Babylon* were the tribes of *Israel* permitted to return from their captivity into their own land.

Verse 6. *For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let him declare what he sees.*

Thus hath the LORD said unto me, "Go, my prophet, appoint one of thy brethren the prophets, and let him take his place upon a watch-tower in the neighbourhood of *Babylon*, that he may there observe every movement either to or from that city, and may make a faithful and immediate report of what he sees."

Verse 7. *And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed.*

By these horsemen may be intended *Cyrus* and *Darius*, the principal leaders of the army that marched against, and besieged *Babylon*; and by the chariot of asses, and the chariot of camels may be designed the warlike forces that followed them in the expedition. Instead of reading, *and*  
*he*



he hearkened diligently with much heed, I would rather read, he hearkened where there was much to be heard, or where there was a great noise,\* namely, the march of the Medes and Persians against Babylon, or rather the prodigious tumult there was in the city in the night in which it was taken, or the night, verse 4 of our chapter, in which its pleasure was turned into fear.

Verse 8. *And he cried, A lion: my Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time, and I am set in my ward whole nights.*

And he cried, a lion, or rather as a lion,§ that is, with a strong and awful voice, declaring at the same time how faithfully he discharged his duty day and night, and that therefore his report was to be regarded, since it was the report not of a dream or a lie, but of wakeful and vigilant observation.

Verse 9. *And behold here comes a chariot of men, and a couple of horsemen: and he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.*

B 2

A chariot

\* The words in the original are וְהִקְשִׁיב קִשְׁבַּ רַב-קִשְׁבַּ which are rendered by Schmidius et auscultavit Auscultationem; (ubi) magna (fuit) Auscultatio (h. e. Sonus).

§ The particle *as*, says Mr Lowth on the place, is frequently understood, and produces as instances Mai. xv. 5. Pl. xi. 1. 2 Sam. xxv. 37. Job xi. 12. Nahum iii. 12. and Vittinga translates, *Glamavitque ut Leo*; and Schmidius; *Glamavit enim sicut Leo*.

4 *The State of the World in general, and of*

A chariot of men, and a couple of horsemen appear in sight, and bring the news that *Babylon* is fallen, that she is certainly fallen, and that all her graven images, in whom she trusted, and gloried, share in the same destruction with herself, that they are broken in pieces, and are scattered in the vilest shame and ruin upon the ground.

Verse 10. *O my threshing, and the corn of my floor ! That which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the GOD of Israel, have I declared unto you.*

O my people, that under the tyranny of *Babylon* have been oppressed and crushed like the corn that is beaten out upon the floor,|| that which I have

|| If we were to consider the method taken in our countries for threshing corn it may well serve to represent hard and heavy sufferings, but if we attend to the custom of beating out corn in the Eastern countries, the metaphor will appear with much greater strength and advantage. " At this day, says Dr Hammond, in those parts under the Turk's dominions, (and also in " *Spain*, where by the inhabiting of the *Moors*, who are Bastard-  
" *Jews*, many *Jewish* customs are retained) the threshing-floor  
" is in an eminent place in the open field, large enough to be  
" compared with that of *Araunab*, 2 Sam. xxiv. where *David*  
" built an altar. Thither after gathering the corn they bring  
" it, then they have a pair of wheels of iron, joined with an  
" axle-tree, and dented or toothed like a saw, and sometimes  
" an heavy board or plank, about the bigness of an ordinary  
" door, driven on the lower side, full of sharp stones or pieces  
" of flint, and one of these the oxen draw over it, so at once  
" with their feet treading out the corn, and with these breaking  
" the straw into small parts, which is the ordinary food for their  
" cattle all the year." See Dr Hammond's *Annotations* on *Matr.*  
iii. 12.



have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of *Israel*, from the living, faithful, covenant-keeping God, that have I declared unto you, that you may encourage yourselves under your grievous sufferings with the assurance that your God will ere long appear for you in the punishment of your enemies, and your deliverance and salvation.

What we have proposed as the ground of our present discourse is the sixth verse only, *For thus hath the LORD said unto me, Go, set a watchman; let him declare what he sees.* And without any thing like a pretence in me to more than a common commission from God, or to more than a common station, that of a *watchman* (for such are all ministers from their very office) upon duty by the appointment of my great Master, let me,

I. Declare to you what I observe as to the world in general; and,

II. Let me declare to you what I discover as to those lands in particular.

I. Let me declare to you what I observe as to the world in general. And,

I. When I cast my eye over the world in general I see a vast dominion of ignorance, idolatry, superstition, and all kinds of wickedness. If in the survey of the habitable world we run down the long confines of the *African* coast, enter into the *East-Indies*, and take into our views the countries of *Cbina*, and *Japan*; or if we travel over the *American* continent, and see what vast

spaces are inhabited by *Indians* both in the *Northern* and *Southern* divisions of those immensely extended regions, alas ! what shall we find there but rude, uncultivated savages, minds, multitudes of which cannot be said to be as yet humanized, and all or most of them overwhelmed in heathen darkness, without one pure evangelical ray among them ! How idolatrous, and how barbarous ! What mountains of prey ! What habitations of cruelty ! where the true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom he hath sent, are not revealed in the light, or even in the glimmering of gospel-day. As to other countries, and here let us cast abroad our views to *Persia*, and the vast *Turkish* empire, what do we behold there but thousands, may I not say millions of souls, seduced by the religion, if it may be called such, of a vile impostor ; and for the Bible, the true light from heaven, cheated with the *Koran*, where that impious wretch *Mahomet* usurps the place, and bears away the honours of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, the *Amen*, the true and faithful *Witness*, and the only " Name given under heaven " whereby we can be saved ?"

I might next direct your sight to the *European* nations ; and alas ! what are to be seen there, particularly in *France*, *Spain*, *Portugal*, *Poland*, *Hungary*, *Flanders*, and a great part of *Germany*, but the idolatries, and superstitions of *Popery*, a Babel that, though it pretends to stand upon a christian basis, has been raised up, as it were, in defiance



defiance to heaven, has been cemented by the blood of saints and martyrs from age to age, and has so destroyed the pure simplicity of the gospel, as to set up in its room a religion, if it may be called such, compiled of the most absurd and abominable tenets and practices, in an outrageous affront to sense and reason, and the most shameful apostacy from the doctrines and commands of holy and unerring Scripture. In other countries indeed we shall find the *Protestant Religion*, such as in several cities of *Switzerland*, in *Sweden*, *Denmark*, *Holland*, a considerable part of *Germany*, and in our happy islands of *Great-Britain*, and *Ireland*, and our *American* plantations: but, alas! how little religion, I mean, of true, living, powerful religion, animated by the grace, and directed according to the rules of the gospel, is to be seen in the *reformed* countries! How much shadow, and form, but how little substance and vitality! And, if we may judge of the state of religion in other *Protestant* countries by what we may observe in our own, may we not, without any breach of charity say that, though "in words" they profess God, yet that in works they deny "him;" that there are places even in *Protestant* lands almost as dark as *Paganism* could make them, and that there are innumerable multitudes of their inhabitants under a christian name, and amidst the distinguishing privileges of the *Reformation*, both for knowledge and freedom, who are indulging themselves in the grossest and most

scandalous iniquities, as drunkenness, debauchery, cursing, swearing, lying, stealing, pride, malice, envy, avarice, and every other wickedness that has ever disgraced and sunk the human nature? And, while iniquity abounds, how does the love of the better, the worthier part in *Protestant* countries, wax cold? How little spiritual favour, zeal, and uniformly holy conversation and behaviour are to be found in those who are unquestionably the most exemplary and ornamental professors of the *Reformed* religion? and what sad occasion have we to lament the declension and decay of godliness, and that few, very few, are, in this season of darkness, and general slumber, might I not say of death itself, standing with their loins girded, and their lamps burning? Add further, that we hear but little, very little revivals of the work of God either in our own or other countries. What little stirring among the dry bones? Where is the Lord God of our fathers? Does not the Spirit of grace and holiness seem to be restrained? Do we not appear to be left almost to an unanimated gospel, and in the sanctuaries of our God, where his word is preached in its purity, how seldom do we hear of its power, and how rarely do we find the arrows of conviction penetrating the heart, and making sinners cry out, "What shall we do to be saved?" Alas! what numbers go to and fro from the place of public worship in mere form, and feel no more efficacy from week to week, and may I

not



not add from year to year, so as to prevail upon them to break their league with sin, and turn to God by true repentance, and in sound conversion, than the posts or pillars of the temples where they assemble? And how sad will it be if God should for our sins desert his sanctuaries, and say to us, as he once did to a very provoking people, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not: make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and convert and be healed.\*" Thus, when I take a survey of the world in general, I see a vast dominion of ignorance, idolatry, superstition, and all kinds of wickedness: and accordingly as a faithful watchman I declare to you what I see.

II. In the survey of the world in general I evidently perceive that very terrible judgments are either actually felt, or most awfully threatened: What think we of the war both by sea and land of the *Russians*, and *Turks*? How much blood has been already shed in battle, and massacre, and how much more in all probability will be shed before peace will be made between the two vast empires, that are now contending for victory in all the horrors of a most murderous and desolating war? Let me add, that what other powers may

\* Isai. vi. 9, 10.

may be soon involved in the quarrel, and how far the flame, that is kindled with so much fury, may extend its conflagration, is known only to that God who has suffered it to rise, and still suffers it to burn on and destroy without any present prospect of its extinction. I must mention also, when I am attending to the terrible judgments of the Almighty that are either actually felt, or awfully threatened, that the *Plague*, or some Calamity very like it, seems to be receiving its commission to arise, and devour much flesh, and, considering the intercourses, however unfriendly, between the *Turks* and *Russians*, and the constant communication of one country with another in the way of commerce, where would be the wonder if this first-born of death, this swift and most tremendous minister of divine vengeance, should extend itself from *Turkey* and the *Polish* frontiers, if not *Poland* itself, where it now rages, over the *Russian* empire, and thence take its terrible circuit over all *Europe*, destroying by thousands and ten thousands in a few days or hours? And among the rest of the cities given to its power, how soon might our populous and crowded city become the terror of our country, the range of death, and the habitation of mourning and sorrow? hundreds and thousands expiring every week, and the survivors themselves in jeopardy every hour, and afraid to inter even their own friends and relatives, lest from their graves they should receive that deadly contagion, which in a little time would



would open their own. Thus in the survey of the world in general, I evidently perceive very terrible judgments either actually felt, or awfully threatened, and accordingly as a faithful watchman I make my report.

III. And Lastly, In the view of the world around me I discover some tokens for good, and just occasions of joy. As,

1. The disgrace and expulsion of the *Jesuits* in the *Popish* countries. *Jesuitism* has been, and that with very good reason, reckoned the grand pillar of *Popery*, as the *Jesuits* are an order of men very numerous, entirely devoted to the service of the *Pope*, and that leave nothing unattempted to support and extend his usurpation and power ;§ and yet, not only in *France*, but even in

§ Mr Bower, in his *History of the Popes*, Vol. VII. P. 456, and 457, gives the following account of the *Jesuits*. “ In this  
“ *Pope's* (*Paul the Third's*) time, was founded the Order of  
“ *Jesuits* by *Inigo*, or *Ignatius of Loyola*, a native of the pro-  
“ vince of *Guipuscoa* in *Spain*, who, being a soldier, gave it  
“ the military name of the company of *Jesus*, and from thence  
“ they are called *Jesuits*. To the three vows of *Poverty*, *Cha-*  
“ *stity*, and *Obedience*, common to all religious orders, they  
“ add a fourth, that of implicit, blind, and unlimited submission  
“ to the *Pope* ; and thus are they at his absolute disposal, al-  
“ ways ready at a moment's warning to repair to what part of  
“ the world he shall think fit to send them. The present *Pope*.  
“ *Paul the Third*, confirmed their order by a Bull, dated the  
“ 27th of *September*, 1540, but on condition that it should not  
“ exceed the number of sixty persons. This restraint the same  
“ *Pope* took off by a second Bull of the 14th of *March* 1543,  
“ leaving

in *Spain* and *Portugal*, where *Popery* has prevailed in its thickest darkness, and exercised its most bloody

“ leaving them at liberty to admit as many as they pleased.  
“ Thus they became in the space of 136 years a very numerous  
“ and formidable body, for in 1543 the whole order consisted of  
“ no more than 80 persons, and in 1675, when their last catalogue was printed at *Rome*, they were increased to the number of 17,655, and they are supposed at this time to be in  
“ in all about 20,000. It may be said with truth, that this  
“ order alone has contributed more than all the other orders  
“ together to confirm the wavering nations in the faith of *Rome*,  
“ to support the tottering authority of the High Pontiff, to  
“ check the progress of the *Reformation*, and to make amends  
“ for the losses their holinesses had sustained in *Europe*, by propagating the Gospel, and with it a blind submission to the  
“ Holy See, among the *African*, *American*, and *Indian* infidels. The *Jesuits* are hated by most other orders, especially  
“ by the *Benedictines* and the *Dominicans*; by the former because they have been enriched at their expence; by the latter, for supplanting them, and engrossing to themselves the  
“ the favour and confidence of sovereign princes; for till the  
“ institution of this artful and insinuating order, the *Dominicans*  
“ alone directed the consciences of all the kings and princes of  
“ *Europe*.

“ The end principally proposed by this order, says Mr  
“ *Chambers* in his account of them, is to gain converts to the  
“ *Roman* church; with which view they disperse themselves in  
“ every country and nation, and with amazing industry and  
“ address, pursue the end of their institution. No difficulty  
“ so great they cannot surmount, no danger so imminent they  
“ will not undergo, no crimes so shocking that have not been  
“ perpetrated by them for the service of their cause.” To confirm the truth of this last particular, however black and horrible, let the method they take to animate an agent employed by them for the murder of a prince be considered, as I find it represented in *Rodolphus Hospinianus* in his *Historia Jesuitica*, P. 225, of which the following is a faithful translation.

It



bloody cruelty, even in these countries the *Jesuits* have been disgraced, and from thence they have

“ It is the custom of the *Jesuits* privately to bring the un-  
 “ happy man, whom they have persuaded to assassinate a noble,  
 “ or prince, into a chapel. The knife, wrapt up in a linen-  
 “ cloth, and deposited in a case of ivory wrought all over with  
 “ hieroglyphical figures together with an *Agnus Dei*, is pro-  
 “ duced. While the knife is drawing out of the sheath some  
 “ drops of holy water are sprinkled upon it, and some conse-  
 “ crated beads of coral are fastened to the hilt, with an indul-  
 “ gence, that as many flabs as the person shall give the prince,  
 “ so many souls he shall deliver from purgatory. They next  
 “ put the knife into the hand of the parricide, and commend it  
 “ to him in these words: O thou chosen son of God, take  
 “ the sword of *Jephthah*, the sword of *Samson*, the sword of  
 “ *David*, with which he cut off *Goliath*’s head, the sword of  
 “ *Gideon*, the sword of *Judith*, the sword of the *Maccabees*,  
 “ the sword of *Pope Julius* the 2d, by which he rescued him-  
 “ self from the hands of kings with a large effusion of the blood  
 “ of cities; go, and be discreetly brave, and may God  
 “ strengthen thine arm! Upon this all fall down upon their  
 “ knees, and the Principal recites the following prayer. Be  
 “ present cherubim, be present seraphim: ye thrones, ye  
 “ powers, ye holy angels, be present, and fill this blessed vessel  
 “ with a perpetual glory, and day by day show him the crown  
 “ of the blessed Virgin, and the holy patriarchs, and martyrs.  
 “ He is no longer of our, but your society. And do thou, O  
 “ God, who art at once terrible, and yet to be overcome by  
 “ prayer, and who in thy sanctuary hast revealed to thy servant  
 “ that he should kill this tyrant and heretick, and transfer his  
 “ crown to a catholic prince, do thou, we pray, fortify his  
 “ body for the work to which we have consecrated him, and  
 “ give him strength that he may be able to perform thy will.  
 “ Arm him with a divinely powerful breast-plate, that he may  
 “ escape the hands of all who would apprehend him. Fledge  
 “ him with wings, that his holy body may disappoint the at-  
 “ tempts of every barbarian that would betray him. Shine in  
 “ upon

have been most ignominiously expelled, and it does not appear likely, with all their arts of policy and intrigue, that they will be ever able to rally

“ upon his soul with thine exhilarating beams, by which his  
 “ body may be so strengthened that, superior to all fear, he  
 “ may rejoice and triumph in the face of dangers and torments.  
 “ This prayer being ended, the parricide is brought before the  
 “ altar, over which is painted the history of *James Clemens*, a  
 “ *Dominican Monk*, with the pictures of angels protecting and  
 “ conveying him to heaven. This the *Jesuits* shew the parricide,  
 “ and at the same time present him with a celestial crown,  
 “ saying, Lord, look down upon this man, thine arm, and  
 “ the executioner of thy justice : Let all the saints rise up, and  
 “ give place to him. These ceremonies being performed, four  
 “ *Jesuits* are deputed to converse with the parricide. In their  
 “ discourses they repeatedly tell him that they see a divine  
 “ brightness upon him, and that the radiance constrains them  
 “ to kiss his hands and feet ; that he is no longer in their eyes a  
 “ man, but one of the saints in glory. They pretend also that  
 “ they cannot help envying the pitch of dignity and happiness  
 “ to which he is now arrived, and utter with a sigh, I wish  
 “ that God had chosen me for this work in your room, and  
 “ strengthened me in the same manner, that so, escaping the  
 “ pains of purgatory, I might at death immediately enter into  
 “ the joys of paradise.

“ But if the man whom they have thought fit to employ in  
 “ the assassination should waver, and draw back from their persuasions,  
 “ they will try to work upon him by haunting him  
 “ with some ugly monstrous shapes at night, or the pretended  
 “ apparitions of the *Virgin Mary*, or some angel, or saint in  
 “ heaven, or of *Ignatius*, or some of their order. Thus these  
 “ ringleaders in wickedness and murder, either by the terrors  
 “ of punishment, or the ambition of a false virtue, draw away  
 “ unwary young men into their snares, to the imminent danger  
 “ of their lives in this world, and their souls in the world  
 “ to come.”



rally their forces, and recover their influence; and the *Pope* himself seems utterly unable, however kind his inclinations may be towards them, to restore and reinstate them in the kingdoms from whence they have been banished. This remarkable event seems to promise mercy to the *Israel* of God. It looks as if *Antichrist* was beginning to fall before the ark of the LORD, and as if Providence was taking some of the first steps towards the fulfilment of the sacred prophecies, *that the man of sin should be made the son of perdition,† and that Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all\*.*

2. The spirit or at least the power of persecution, seems in a good measure to be allayed. I pretend not to say that *Popery* is any other than *Popery*, I mean, "the abomination that makes "desolate," or that, if it was the secular interest, or policy of the *Popish* princes, and kingdoms, they would not renew the same tragedies they have already so often, and so wickedly acted in the christian world, so that, as Dr *Geddes* observes, "infinitely more blood has been shed by the *Papal* "empire than ever was shed by *Rome* heathen||." But yet I do not find that persecution, either through the increasing number of *Protestant* countries, and the political wisdom of *Popish* princes, or from some other such reasons, is making those butcheries among the nations it

once

† 2 Theff. ii. 3, and 8.

\* Rev. xviii. 21.

|| Dr *Geddes*, Vol. III. Essay 6.

once did; and particularly with regard to *France*, that some few years since most cruelly persecuted the *Protestants*, it seems to have been for some years past in better temper towards them, and I have not received any very late accounts of any professors of the *Reformed Religion* having been slaughtered, or enslaved, or even molested for meeting together to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences: so that though there is no *Toleration*, (for the cruel edicts against them are not repealed) yet there is evidently a *connivance*. And surely this leniency, this remission of *Popish* cruelty, is a very comfortable consideration, not merely, as there is a stop put to the wanton effusion of innocent blood, and the excision of the faithful servants of God, but as there is an opportunity for *Protestantism* to extend itself, and in proportion as this light spreads we know the darkness of *Popery* must give way, and thus there will be an additional token for good, that this mystery of iniquity shall come to an end. When the Boar out of the wood lies asleep, we may hope that the vine of *Israel* will strike its root, strengthen its branches, and diffuse abroad its blessings.

3. Let me add as another favourable circumstance, when I take a survey of the world in general, that there seems to be a very happy opening for evangelizing the numerous tribes of *Indians* in *North-America*. Our victories over the *French*



in that part of the world, and the vast additions we have made to our dominions in the last war have paved our way to a powerful influence over the *Indians*, and a free communication with them. Some visits that have been made to them have happily shewn that they are not averse to hear the gospel.† The *Indian* school under the Rev. Dr *Wheelock*, for which there were such generous contributions made in our country some years since by Messrs *Whitaker* and *Occom*, is admirably calculated to spread the knowledge of salvation among them, as Dr *Wheelock* educates the children of *Indians*, and then sends them back into their countries as ministers and schoolmasters; and I have lately received accounts from the Doctor himself of the continued smiles of Providence upon his design, a printed Narrative of which, as he himself signifies, may in a little time be published to the world.\* What a blessed opening is here for the diffusion of the Gospel among those numerous benighted tribes, and how comfortable is it to think that there are those

C ministers

† See the Rev. Mr *Charles Beatty's* Journal of a two months tour with a view of introducing the Gospel among the *Indians*.

\* In a letter to me, dated *Boston*, July 10, 1770. the Doctor thus writes. "Glad should I be to write to you particularly of a series of occurrences in favour of my school, in which God is giving further testimony that he still owns it, and designs greatly to enlarge it. But I have no leisure at present. I hope to be able to publish some Narrative of the affair, by which you may be gratified, and your heart excited to praise."

ministers and servants of CHRIST, who are raised up, and inspirited to seize the favourable juncture! May their laudable attempts be abundantly succeeded! May the wilderness, and desert rejoice, and blossom as the rose before their sacred labours! May many run to and fro in those hitherto uncultivated barbarous regions, and may knowledge be increased, and converts flee as clouds, and as doves to their windows, to JESUS the ark of salvation! Such are the tokens for good, the lucid spots, may I so speak, in this our dark dark world, which I as a faithful watchman declare to you.

Before I quit this head, the survey of the world in general, I would mention to you an event, which though it is not in our power to determine whether it is designed by Providence for good or evil, though I think its aspect has more of the first than the last upon it, yet is beyond all expectation, and very remarkable, I mean the very rapid, and, in a manner, irresistible success of the *Russians* against the *Turks*, so that they have routed them both by sea and land, and are drawing nearer and nearer both with their field and naval forces to *Constantinople*, the metropolis of *Tunkey*, and the seat of that prodigious empire. Should this event take place, the consequence might not improbably be the gradual declension of the *Mahometan* imposture, and the end of the usurpation of the *Eastern Antichrist*; an event most sincerely and fervently to be desired:



fired: for though the *Russians* cannot be properly stiled *Protestants*, yet they are not the disciples of *Mahomet*, nor in the least inclined to his religion, if it may be called by that name, and consequently by making themselves masters of *Turkey*, they might give a mortal blow to that wide-extended delusion in the world; and what they might do afterwards, with such an amazing swell to their greatness as that of the *Turkish Empire* annexed to their dominions, and with such almost inexhaustible multitudes of men, I say, what they might do afterwards, (for neither are they *Papists*,)\* if they should turn their arms against

\* As I have said that the *Russians*, intending those of the professed religion in *Russia*, are not *Protestants*, nor *Mahometans*, nor *Papists*, but have not signified what their religion is, it may not be unacceptable to the Reader to know what kind of tenets and worship they embrace, by which they are thus distinguished from *Protestants*, *Mahometans*, and *Papists*; and here I shall epitomize the account concerning their religion, as it is given in the 35th volume of *The modern universal History*, from P. 130, to P. 151. "The *Russians* profess the religion  
 "of the *Greek church*, which is said to have been first embraced by the great dutchess *Olha*, or *Olga*, in the year of  
 "CHRIST 955, and afterwards by her grandson the great duke  
 "*Wolodimir* in 988, whose example was followed by his subjects; but their ignorance and superstition have greatly corrupted even that. They hold three sacraments, Baptism,  
 "the Lord's Supper, and extreme Unction.—They hold Transubstantiation, but receive the Eucharist in both kinds.—  
 "They use auricular Confession, and think they are cleansed by  
 "it from as many sins as they confess by name, and in particular to the priest.—The *Athanasian* creed is the rule of their  
 "faith. They believe in God the Father, as creator of all  
 "the

against the *Popish* countries, and particularly  
against *Italy* and *Rome*, the seat of the *Western*  
*Antichrist*,

“ the world ; in God the Son, as sanctifier and redeemer of all  
“ mankind ; and in the holy Ghost, as sanctifier of all the  
“ faithful ; but they maintain that the holy Ghost proceeds  
“ from the Father only.—They are permitted to have the  
“ whole Bible in their houses.—But they hold tradition to be  
“ of equal authority with the word of God, and think to sa-  
“ tisfy the second commandment by allowing no carved image,  
“ but their churches are filled with paintings to which they  
“ pay the grossest idolatry.—Their church service consists of  
“ abundance of trifling ceremonies, long masses, singing, and  
“ prayers, all of which are performed by the priests, the con-  
“ gregation in the mean time saying, “ God be merciful to me.”  
“ A lecture from one of the ancient fathers is sometimes added,  
“ but sermons are preached but in few churches, and even there  
“ but seldom. They do not believe in Purgatory, but they  
“ hold that there are two several places to which the souls of  
“ men retire after the separation from the body, there to wait  
“ the day of judgment ; some in a pleasant and delightful  
“ abode, where they enjoy the conversation of angels ; others  
“ in a dark and dismal valley, where they see nought but de-  
“ vils.” I will add to this account of the *Russian* religion from  
the same work, “ that the inhabitants of the provinces con-  
“ quered from *Sweden* profess *Lutheranism*, and that the *Pro-*  
“ *testants*, of whom there are great numbers among the *Rus-*  
“ *sians*, as also the *Papists* enjoy a full liberty of conscience, and  
“ the public exercise of their religion.”—Nor let me omit a pa-  
ragraph to shew how unconnected the *Russians* are with the *Ro-*  
*man Church*, however they may agree with it in some of its  
tenets, “ In the thirteenth century, says our author, several  
“ *Popes* laboured hard to put the great dukes of *Russia* out of  
“ conceit with the *Greek* religion by recommending to them  
“ that of *Rome*, but without success. The doctors of the *Sor-*  
“ *bonne* at *Paris* made the attempt of late years, but were not  
“ able to carry their point. The members of the *Greek* church,  
“ whose



*Antichrist*, is not for us to determine, but it is not improbable, to an eye of reason, but they might be able to overwhelm them all under the inundation of their stupendous and almost inconceivable power ; and I own that it seems very likely from the accounts of scripture that *Italy* will be broken in upon by the nations of the *East*, for after the effusion of the vial of the fifth angel, *Rev. xvi. 10. upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom being represented as becoming full of darknes*, that is, of sorrow and distress, and their gnawing their tongues for pain, by which we may understand the ever-memorable blow which *Pöpery* received at the *Reformation*, and from which it has never recovered, we read verse 12, of the same chapter, *that the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and that the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the East might be prepared.* “The *Turks*,” says the learned *Mr Lowman*, in a marginal note upon this passage (it will be the same thing by the way whoever are masters of *Turkey*) “may be intended by the kings of the East, and “the river *Euphrates* may signify the *Adriatic Sea*,

“whose tenets are embraced by an empire of near 6000 miles,  
 “while the *Roman* has not half that extent in *Europe*, have al-  
 “ways been bent upon maintaining at least an equality with  
 “those of the *Latin* communion, and have ever feared the  
 “zeal, or, as they not improperly call it, the ambition of the  
 “*Church of Rome*, which, limited as it is in our hemisphere,  
 “stiles herself universal, and has tried but too much to realize  
 “that great title.”

“ *Sea, or Gulph of Venice*, which is the eastern  
 “ boundary of the *Pope’s* dominions, even of  
 “ the *Exarchate of Ravenna*, which is most pro-  
 “ perly the patrimony of *St Peter*, in the stile of  
 “ the *Roman court*.” And again, “ this judgment  
 “ most probably means some descent of the  
 “ *Turks*, who are now the *Eastern* neighbours of  
 “ *Italy*, and may some time or another have an  
 “ opportunity to break in upon a country, that  
 “ lies so near, and is so inviting.—This period  
 “ must according to the series of the vials fall  
 “ in, I think, within some time between the years  
 “ 1700 and 1900. §”—Who knows then but that  
 the *Russians* may now by their swift and surprizing  
 conquests be opening the way for the fulfilment  
 of the Divine Prophecies, and may ere long  
 make a successful descent upon *Italy*, and hum-  
 ble, and cut short, if not totally vanquish and  
 crush the *Roman See*? But I only give you my  
 best conjectures. Providence is to be left to ful-  
 fil the Divine Prediction; but methinks, as on  
 the one side we should not be too rash and pe-  
 remptory in the explanations of prophecies that  
 are not yet accomplished, so on the other hand  
 we ought not to be inattentive to the completion  
 of them, or any occurrences in the world that  
 seem to be leading the way to events so glorious  
 to God, and so merciful to his people.

Having

§ *Lowman’s Paraphrase and Notes on the Revelation of St John*, P. 199, and 200. A performance whose perusal I own  
 has given me great satisfaction, and which perhaps is the best  
 Key that has ever been given to the world to unlock the  
 mysteries of that divine and surprizing Book.



Having given you an account of what I discover as a Watchman relating to the world in general, so

II. Let me declare to you what I observe as to *Great-Britain* in particular. And what do I see but,

I. Much iniquity I fear, and but little, little true religion? Alas! *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint: from the sole of the foot even unto the head, from the lowest to the highest orders of men among us, what wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores* \*! What a dissolute and profligate age is that in which we live! What neglect of GOD, and CHRIST, and things divine! What open and flagitious immoralities in camp, in navy, in city, and country! Good laws it is true we have, but do they not sleep like rusty swords in their scabbards, when they should be drawn forth for the terror, and punishment of evil-doers? Let me mention two iniquities that I fear are little attended to by magistracy, I mean, *Debauchery* and *the Profanation of the Lord's Day*. There was a Society a few years since for the *Reformation of Manners* here in *London*, and they directed their zeal particularly against lewdness, and the violation of the Sabbath, but, for want of meeting with powerful countenance and support, this pious association, with all their good designs and efforts, is in a manner broken up, if not quite dissolved.

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And

\* *Isai. i. 5, 6:*

And now what swarms of shameless prostitutes are there in our streets, which surely, if magistrates would but discharge their duty with fidelity and vigour, would be effectually restrained to the infinite advantage of youth, who have often been seduced by harlots to their shame and ruin, it is to be feared, both in this world, and that to come. And as to the profanation of the LORD's day, it seems to have grown of late to such an height, as was unknown in a manner in former years, such as not only publicly buying and selling, riding abroad for diversion and amusement, but the travelling to and fro of stage-coaches, and this without scarcely any interruption or reproof, that ever I heard of, from our magistrates, though it is done in flagrant violation of our laws, *anno* 29 *Carol.* II. cap. 7. and practices of this kind are the ready way to prevent the growth of practical Religion among us, for what sense of God and duty is likely to be kept up where the day that should be holy to the LORD is openly profaned, and what iniquity is there that has not entered by the breach of the Sabbath? For how often has this sin proved the first step to the gallows? nay, how often has the confession of it been the last groan that has been heard there? Spirit of Magistracy! whither art thou gone? Art thou departed from this city, from this land, or art thou only concerned to punish house-breakers, highwaymen, and this and the other kind of thieves, and to let Prostitution and Sabbath-breaking reign with an untrouled



trouled licence and enormity in our streets? In vain are sent from one month to another shoals of transports to foreign countries, or crowds of young criminals to the fatal tree, if these sins are suffered to increase upon us with little or no endeavours to stop their growth. What are we doing but lopping off some of the branches of vice, and yet letting its roots, and its main body strengthen, and enlarge themselves? And can we reasonably expect that murders, robberies, and villanies will not abound, and prepare in large and long successions fresh victims for the gallows, when lewdness, that infatuating, expensive, and ruinous iniquity, and when Sabbath-breaking, that banishes the thoughts of God, and duty from our minds, (the best curb upon our evil lusts and passions,) are almost, I fear, as much neglected, as if they had become quite harmless, as if there were no laws against them, or they had even changed their natures, and from sins had brightened themselves into virtues? I will add, that we seem in a peculiar emphatical sense to answer the description of the last days, “when men  
 “would be lovers of pleasure more than lovers  
 “of God\*.” What dissipation, what thirst after, what pursuit of empty and foolish diversions, *Plays, Masquerades, Routs, &c.* to the dreadful consumption of time and substance, and the increase of more and greater ungodliness? *Pleasure, pleasure*, how shall we kill time by this and the  
 other

\* 2 Tim. iii. 4.

other vain, if not illicit diversion, this seems to be the cry, may I not truly say, of a great part of the nation, this the idol which we are worshipping? And accordingly how are the places of entertainment increased, and with what multitudes are they thronged? While on the other hand, small, small indeed, I fear, comparatively, is the number of persons among us, who, according to an estimate of them from their conversation and lives by the rules of scripture, can in the judgment of charity thought to be lively, or indeed real christians. Particularly was an angel appointed to go through this city and its suburbs, and set a mark upon the foreheads of them only who sighed and cried for the abominations committed in the midst of us, how few, I am afraid, would appear with the stamp of heaven upon their brows? Or if an angel of destruction was commissioned to burn down in one night every house in *London*, where the devotions of the family and closet were not seriously performed the foregoing evening, what a tremendous havoc I am persuaded would be made among our habitations by the next morning? I might go on—the subject is in a manner inexhaustible. But I need not enlarge. You hear, you see the truth of what I say, and to dwell upon this article is as unnecessary as it is mournful and distressing.

II. As I see much wickedness, and I fear but little, little true religion, so may I not add that  
there



there are much calamity and misery among us, and that much more may be apprehended? The distresses of the poor have been, and may I not say are still very great, in the decay and stagnation of our trade, in the high prices of necessaries and provisions of every kind, and I fear in the cruel arts and oppression of avarice, and sordid selfishness? These are undoubtedly great calamities, and when shall we hope to see an end of them? Besides all this we know not but we are entering upon a fresh war with a powerful enemy: and the sword drawn between two mighty kingdoms not only drinks largely of blood, the blood it may be of thousands, and ten thousands, but is unavoidably attended also with many more evils, of all which who can see the end? for, though the floodgates of war are soon opened, yet who can say to the deluge of miseries that may rush through them, Hitherto shall you come, and no further, and here shall your desolations be stayed? Let me add, what I have mentioned before, that the pestilence, or a calamity not unlike it, is certainly broken out in some parts of *Europe*, and that it may be soon sent in the righteous displeasure of the Almighty against our land; and what language, what imagination can paint the horrors of that tremendous judgment? This city, not near so large as it is now, in the last visitation of the plague 1665, lost 100000 of its inhabitants\*,

\* The number that died in *London*, besides all the rest of the land, was about an hundred thousand. reckoning the *Quakers*, and others, that were never put in the Bills of Mortality, with those that were within the Bills.

*Sylvester's Life of Mr Baxter*, Part III. page 1.

and during the time of its visitation Mr *Baxter* thus writes, "The plague hath seized on the  
 " most famous and most excellent city of *Cbrist-*  
 " *tendom*, and at this time (*Sept. 1665.*) 8000,  
 " and near 300 die of all diseases in a week.  
 " It hath scattered and consumed the inhabitants,  
 " multitudes being dead, and fled. The calamities  
 " and cries of the diseased and impoverished  
 " are not to be conceived by those that are absent  
 " from them. Every man is a terror to his  
 " neighbour and himself, for God for our sins is  
 " a terror to us all †." But that I may shew you  
 more distinctly the distresses of a raging pestilence,  
 and may thereby excite you to deprecate this fore  
 judgment, and awaken the sinner to repent, and  
 the saint to greater zeal and holiness, if perad-  
 venture God may turn away his wrath from us,  
 let me give you a few passages out of *an historical*  
*account of the plague \* at Marseilles*, a city in *France*,  
 about fifty years since, an account that was pub-  
 lished by authority at *Paris*. "The misery, says  
 " the author of the narrative, which the city lay  
 " under, is not to be imagined. The distemper  
 " was so violent that the hospitals were a repo-  
 " sitory but for a moment; they who entered in  
 " the

† *Sylvester's Life of Baxter.* Part II. page 448.

\* See an excellent Sermon of the late Dr *Jennings* on this occasion preached at *Crosby-Square*, Nov. 1721, out of which the abstract of the account of the plague at *Marseilles* is taken.



“ the evening were thrown the next day into the  
“ ditches, and the dead every day successively  
“ made place for others that were newly infected.  
“ It killed most that were attacked with it, with-  
“ out giving quarter hardly to any one; and at  
“ those houses where once it entered, it made a  
“ sweep of all from the least to the greatest.  
“ The workmen of all manner of trades, and  
“ those that were most necessary for life left the  
“ town. All shops were in the general shut up,  
“ and not any people were to be seen in the  
“ streets, but poor dying wretches. Thus proud  
“ *Marseilles*, which was but a few days past so  
“ flourishing, and which enjoyed the greatest  
“ plenty of every thing that should make one  
“ happy, was now no other than the true image  
“ of *Jerusalem* in its desolation, and the plague  
“ had in less than fifteen days made here the most  
“ dismal theatre by the most terrible and fright-  
“ ful ravages that ever were in any city of the  
“ world. Dead bodies lay in great piles one  
“ upon another, without any to carry them away,  
“ and throw them into the ditches. Abundance  
“ of women, that gave suck, died of the conta-  
“ gion, and left great numbers of sucking in-  
“ fants, which were found groaning in their  
“ cradles, when they came to take away the  
“ dead bodies of their mothers. None would  
“ receive these poor babes, and much less nou-  
“ rish or succour them. All compassion was no  
“ more,

“ more, and the dread of that horrible distemper  
“ had stifled all sentiments of charity, and even  
“ of humanity itself. The plague raged with  
“ such impetuosity that it killed every day more  
“ than a thousand persons. All the city seemed  
“ no other than a vast church-yard, and nothing  
“ was presented to your sight, but the sad spec-  
“ tacle of dead bodies piled one upon another in  
“ heaps in every part. And you should see  
“ among the dead bodies a prodigious number  
“ of poor, sick, and dying creatures begging  
“ help of all that past by, as well by their piteous  
“ complaints, as their moving groans, to which  
“ their pains and agonies forced them. And, as  
“ if the distemper was not terrible and cruel  
“ enough, they suffered all the severities of  
“ penury and want, and that from the public  
“ misery, which seemed to go hand in hand with  
“ the plague. It would make any one’s heart  
“ ready to break to see so many poor unhappy  
“ mothers, which had the dead bodies of infants  
“ lying by their sides, and that they should see  
“ their poor babes die before their eyes, and  
“ have nothing in the world to help them; and  
“ also so many poor little infants sucking the  
“ breasts of their dead mothers, being locked  
“ within their arms. Some through the violence  
“ of the melancholy, that seized the heart, cut  
“ their own throats, or threw themselves out of  
“ the windows of their houses, or into the sea,  
“ to put an end to the miseries and pains they  
“ suffered.



“ suffered. So soon as any persons were per-  
“ ceived to be infected in any house they imme-  
“ diately became the object of horror, even to  
“ their nearest relations, and the rest of the fa-  
“ mily either threw them out of the house, or  
“ fled from them without leaving them any help,  
“ delivering them up to hunger and thirst, and  
“ all that could render death the most hard and  
“ cruel. The women practised this to their hus-  
“ bands, and the husbands in like manner to  
“ their wives; children also to their parents, and  
“ parents returned the same to their children.  
“ Nothing was to be heard and seen on all sides  
“ but cries, and tears, moanings, and sighs, and  
“ groans, desolation, terrible consternation, and  
“ even despair. To have a true notion of such  
“ horrors you ought to imagine all the ills and  
“ miseries to which human life can be exposed,  
“ as frights, and the most dreadful inquietudes,  
“ from which there was no release but by death.”

Surely, surely my friends, only the cloud of  
such a calamity that thus concentrates in it almost  
every possible misery, only rising at a distance  
from us, but which may soon grow blacker  
and blacker, extend its gloomy terrors, and  
move onward to *Great-Britain*, and particularly  
to our great metropolis, may well fill us with  
deep solemnity, and awful alarm! May we hear,  
and fear, and do no more wickedly! O that  
each of us may henceforward be able to say to  
our God in the utmost sincerity, *With my soul do*  
*I desire*

*I desire Thee, yea, with my spirit within me will I seek Thee early, for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness* †. I go on,

III. And Lastly, To mention to you some tokens for good, and just occasions for comfort in my views of *Great-Britain*. As,

1. There are undoubtedly a number in our land who are christians in sincerity and truth. Bad as our age is there is a pious remnant scattered up and down in our great city, and throughout the kingdom, else indeed we might ere now *have been made as Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah* \*. There are true christians among the several denominations among us, true christians among the *Dissenters*; and true christians among the members of the *Established Church*, and it is no small pleasure to me to find that there are so many spiritual, evangelical, zealous ministers among our brethren the *Episcopalians*, who, by word and doctrine, by conversation and practice, are giving good proof of their ministry, and, I trust, winning many souls to JESUS CHRIST. May they go on and prosper till there is not a pulpit in *England* where the trumpet of the gospel is not sounded, nor a parish in *England*, which is not filled with divine knowledge, and the life and power of godliness!

2. Provi-

† *Isai.* xxvi. 9.

\* *Isai.* i. 9.



2. Providence is very kind and gracious to us in continuing to us the enjoyment of our sacred rights and privileges. We have the doors of our sanctuaries open to us, and may worship God according to the directions of our consciences without any to molest us, or make us afraid. We may be as good as we will, serve God in our families, and at his house as much, as often as we will, without any obstruction or frowns from government, without any danger or dread of our sacred assemblies being broken up by an armed force, of our goods being confiscated, and our bodies clapt into prison for the offence of worshipping God in the way which we apprehend is most agreeable to his will. Let us read over the history of the hardships and sufferings of the *Puritans*, as they were stiled, though they were not at all the worse for a reproachful name, in the reigns of Queen *Elizabeth*, *James* the 1<sup>st</sup>, and *Charles* the 1<sup>st</sup>, and let us take a survey of the persecutions of the *Non-Conformists* under *Charles* the 2<sup>d</sup> and *James* the 2<sup>d</sup>, and then compare the oppressions and cruelties our forefathers endured with the liberties and blessings of the present times, and I am very sure that we shall see the greatest reason to magnify and bless the name of our God, who has made such an happy distinction between the lot of our ancestors, and our own, and to thank him with all our hearts that our associations for public worship are allowed us, and that the ministers of

the gospel are not driven into corners, or shut up and languishing away their lives in jails. There have been the days, though they are now happily ended, (adored be the divine goodness for the mercy!) when some of the best-bearing, the choicest trees in our LORD's plantations have been plucked up, and cast, as it were, over the fences to be trodden under foot by a rude licentious rabble, and all this for no other fault but that they did not grow exactly in the line of conformity with others. O that we may ever bear upon our minds a grateful relish of our privileges as *Protestant-Dissenters*, and may ever warmly and affectionately pray for our sovereign, who, treading in the steps of his illustrious ancestors, that in so much blessing swayed the sceptre of these realms, continues to us the uninterrupted enjoyment of our sacred invaluable rights and liberties!

3. Let me mention to you, as another token for good, and just cause for our joy, the bright example of social virtue exhibited to the kingdom in those great personages our *King*, and *Queen*. Should it be said that there is a sad corruption of manners among the higher orders of men, and particularly that fornication, adultery, &c. are not uncommon among them, and that they are dreadfully imitated in these iniquities by the lower ranks of life, yet it can by no means be affirmed that these sins are countenanced by the pattern of our *King* and *Queen*, since their irreproachable



proachable example on the other hand holds forth a strong practical rebuke upon these immoralities, so that whosoever turns his eye up to the throne there sees the rays of domestic conjugal virtue shining with an unsullied beauty. “ If piety and  
 “ virtue, as an ingenious writer \* observes, in  
 “ persons of eminent place and dignity are seated  
 “ to great advantage so as to cast a lustre upon  
 “ their very place, and by a strong reflexion  
 “ double the beams of majesty,” may it not be added that they are also seated to great advantage to excite and encourage their numerous beholders in what is excellent and praise-worthy, and in rebuking whatever is base and wicked? May the noble pattern of our *King* and *Queen* in social virtue extend its influence over the court, the city, and the whole kingdom, so as to scatter those vices, which are a violation of the precepts of the gospel, the scandal of human nature, the dissolution of all order, and the utter overthrow domestic felicity. And think not that the particular, that I have mentioned among the articles of our comfort is slight and inconsiderable, for the examples of the great, and especially of princes, whether good or bad, have often a very extensive influence, and who knows, degenerate as we are, how much more prevalent iniquity had been, if, instead of being blessed with a virtuous *King* and *Queen*, they had been of a con-

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trary

\* Archbishop Tillotson.

trary character, such as has often disgraced thrones, and may have spread the poison of immorality in a swift contagion over courts and kingdoms? May their *Majesties* long be happy in each other, and see their branches rising up, under the divine benediction, as the ornaments of their family, the delight of their souls, and the blessings of these realms! And may they, without one shade of vice, or one defect of religion and virtue, diffuse the lustre of an edifying and divine example over the whole country, to the shame and confusion of sin, and the encouragement and support of whatever is praise-worthy in the sight of God and Man!

4. And Lastly, As another comfortable consideration let me mention to you that this year has been rather a year of plenty than of scarcity in our land. How easy is it for the great Governor of the world at all times to afflict us with famine, by either preventing the increase of the earth at first, or destroying the fruits of the ground, when they are growing up, by storm, by a sudden blast, by incessant rain, or scorching drought? He is the Maker, and the Ruler of the sun, the air, the water, and the earth, and it is with him to make the elements the instruments of his mercy, or the ministers of his vengeance, according to his pleasure. How much obliged then are we to our Almighty Benefactor, when he is pleased to cause our fields to fructify, and yield grass for cattle, and herbs and  
corn



corn for the support of man? And, blessed be his name, this year has been crowned with his goodness, and we have no reason to fear, I trust, a want of bread, or that there will be any breaking out or complaining in our streets, unless, which I hope will not be the case, avarice through its wicked practices should be suffered to make an artificial dearth, when the liberal hand of Providence has blessed us with a sufficient plenty. Surely this is a token for good, that, instead of famine, we have the necessities of life, and are not *eating our bread through scarcity by weight* †, but have enough, and it may be to spare. How different thy condition, O *London*, if not in the prevalence of iniquity, yet in the dispensations of Providence, to that of *Constantinople*, which, if report be true, is not only humbled by sea and land by a victorious enemy, but has at once the mingled miseries of pestilence and dearth now raging within its walls! Our late comfortable harvest with other bright traces of the divine benignity to us shew that *God*, notwithstanding all our unworthiness and provocations, has thoughts of peace towards us and not of evil; and we may, as it were, hear him saying to us, as he once did to a people not unlike ourselves for great privileges, and an ungrateful abuse of them, *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee*

† Ezek. iv. 16.

*as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man, the holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not enter into the city\*.*

Having taken a view of what as a watchman I discover as to the state of the world in general, and of *Great-Britain* in particular, as to religion, and the aspects of providence, it remains that I should make some improvement and application of our subject. And,

1. We may observe that there is evidently a miscellany of good and evil, both natural and moral, in the world and in these nations. Dark clouds there are indeed, but yet they are skirted with light. Deep and wide-spreading shades overcast this and the other part of our globe, but yet lucid spots are here and there to be seen. Though there is much iniquity, yet there are some beauties of holiness to be discovered, and, though there is a vast reign of misery, yet there are bright emanations of providential goodness. It is a wilderness through which we are passing, but, blessed be God, it is not all one barren wilderness, and that there are brooks and springs of divine consolation by the way, as well as fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore at the end of our journey. Let it be the daily matter of our humiliation that

there

\* Hof. xi. 8, 9,



there is so much sin, and let it be the daily subject of our thanksgivings that there are the intermingled traces of godliness. And at the same time that we see the fiery aspects of divine justice, and fear before God, let us not overlook the reviving beams of the divine mercy, that we may love as well as fear before him.

2. How pleasant is it to think that, though the views we now take of religion in the world, and in our own land, are in a great degree so melancholy, there are brighter and better days promised in the scriptures, and that they shall most assuredly ere long break upon our world. Ere long the *Eastern and Western Antichrists* shall be pulled down, ere long *Jews and Gentiles* shall see the Salvation of God, ere long the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the LORD and of his CHRIST; and though, for the present, we may truly say *that the light is neither clear nor dark*, yet we may rejoice *that it shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light* \*. Hasten, O LORD, this blissful period! *Let thy ways be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all nations* †! *Father, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven* §! We fervently pray for this happy revolution, and comfort ourselves amidst the dark scenes around us that our God will ere long say to his *Zion, Arise, shine,*

\* Zech. xiv. 6, 7.

† Psal. lxxvii. 2.

§ Matt. vi. 10.

*shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.—And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see and flow together, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee\*.*

3. Is there so much sin in our world, and in our own nation, let us resolve in the strength of divine grace that we will be an holy people unto the LORD. Instead of being carried down the stream of general corruption, let us bravely and steadily oppose it, knowing that it shall be well with them that fear and serve the LORD. If general slumber and death reign around us, let us stand with our loins girded, and with our lamps burning†. Let us see to it that we are blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom let us shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life§. If others are blaspheming, let us be praying; if others are committing iniquity with greediness, and cannot cease from sin, let us be sighing and crying for the abominations of our times;

\* Isai. lx. 1, 3, 4, 5.

† Luke xii. 35.

§ Phil. ii. 15, 16.



times; and if others are instigating one another to vanity and folly, let us be provoking one another to love, and good works; and, in a word, if others are running down religion, let us stand up both in word and deed as advocates for it, remembering how such holy conversation and walk are approved by God in degenerate days, and what exceeding great and precious promises he has made to them. *Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name: and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son, that serves him\*.*

4. And Lastly, How should the sins and miseries prevailing in our world wean us from the present state, and make us long for heaven? It is a sinful, and it is a miserable world, and moral and natural evil reign abroad, and are likely to reign more or less all our days. Let us then be saying to our souls, *Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted†: and, as risen with Jesus Christ, seek those things that are above, for ye are dead, and your lives are hid with Christ in God§.* If we see so much amiss on earth, so much that calls for our tears and groans, let us long

\* Mal. iii. 16, 17, 18.

† Micah ii. 19.

§ Coloss. iii. 1, 3.

long for the heavenly state, where sin and sorrow are both unknown, when that which is perfect as to our sanctification shall come, and that which is in part shall be done away, and when we shall not have transient tastes, or draughts of our Master's joy, but shall be bid welcome into it, to be possessed of it, and swallowed up in it as the vessel in the fulness of the ocean. How happy to be dismissed from this world, from this life, and to take up our mansions in the realms of purity and peace, and to lead the lives of angels, and saints made perfect in holiness and joy! Then, then adieu to all causes of complaint. There is no more plague, there are no more wars to terrify and destroy; there is no more Antichrist to usurp, and eclipse the glories of our divine Redeemer, and wear out the saints of the Most High; there is no more prevalence of iniquity among the wicked many; and there are no more chillings of devout affection among the pious few. When we come to heaven, farewell Sin, and farewell Sorrow in every form, and of every kind: welcome GOD, and CHRIST, welcome pure and benevolent Angels, welcome perfect and harmonious Saints, welcome Glory, welcome a blessed and holy Eternity. To this happy state let our souls be ever aspiring, and let the sin and misery we behold here dissolve our attachments to this world, and inflame our desires, and quicken our preparations for a better!

I con-



I conclude with the excellent exhortation of the apostle *Jude*, in the practice of which we shall at once fall in with our duty and our interest: *But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life\*.*

\* Jude 20, 21.

An

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E R R A T A.

- Page 5. Line 20. for *those* read *these*.  
15. 26. for *Protestant Countries* read *Protestants in Popish Countries*.  
15. 27. for *and* read *or*.

44 AN HYMN, &c.

AN HYMN suited to the SUBJECT,

O R,

*The Gleams of Mercy amidst the Clouds of Sin and Sorrow.*

Short Metre.

I.

SEE millions of mankind  
Wrapt in *Egyptian* night,  
Without one faint, one glimm'ring spark  
Of evangelic light !

II.

See countless myriads more  
With *Popish* glooms o'erspread,  
That blot the day, and all around  
Empoison'd vapours shed !

III.

See, where the Gospel comes,  
And pours its purest ray,  
Thousands reject the Truth and Grace,  
And take the downward way !

IV.

What mis'ries sweep along  
Resistless, unconfin'd,  
Pale famine, pestilence, and war  
In death's dire league combin'd !

But



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V.

But midst this mournful scene  
Some beams of comfort shine:  
Still, still our guilty globe can boast  
A progeny divine.

VI.  
The *Papish* Babel shakes,  
And totters to its fall;

Through *Indian* wilds the Gospel sounds,  
That echo to the call.

VII.  
LORD, through the spacious earth  
Let the glad tidings run,  
Till all by thy MESSIAH blest  
Are to his standard won.

VIII.  
Then shall the gloomy reign  
Of Sin and Sorrow cease,  
And thine own kingdom fill the world  
With Piety and Peace.

FINIS.

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which Number Eighty Persons pe-  
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